

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED at the First
GENERAL MEETING
OF THE

GENTLEMEN, and others in
and near L O N D O N,

Who were Born within the
COUNTY of YORK.

In the Church of *S. Mary-le-Bow*,
Decemb. 3. 1678.

By *JOHN TILLOTSON*, D.D. Dean of *Canterbury*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the three Pigeons over
against the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*: And *William Rogers*, at the Maiden-head over against *S. Dunstan's Church* in *Fleetstreet*. 1679.

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Printed for Iacobus Kluwer, at the three Pigeons over
against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill: And W. I. at
the Middle-Bar over against St. Dunstons
Church in Fleet-street.

To my Honoured
FRIENDS and COUNTRYMEN,

| | | | |
|-----|--|-----|---|
| Mr. | { Hugh Frankland, Leonard Robinson, Abraham Fothergill, William Fairfax, Thomas Johnson, John Hardesty, | Mr. | { Gervas Wilcocker, George Pickering, Edward Duffield, John Topham, Jam. Longbotham, Nathan Holroyd, |
|-----|--|-----|---|

Stewards of the York-shire Fea't.

GENTLEMEN,

THIS Sermon, *which was first*
Preached, and is now published
at your desires, I dedicate to your
Names, to whose prudence and care
the direction and management of this
First general Meeting of our Coun-
try-men was committed: Heartily

A 3 *wish-*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

wishing that it may be some way serviceable to the healing of our unhappy Differences, and the restoring of Unity and Charity among Christians, especially those of the Protestant Reformed Religion.

Gentlemen, I am

Your affectionate Country-man

and humble Servant,

Jo. Tillotson.

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S E R M O N
PREACHED

At the first general Meeting of the
Gentlemen, and others, in and
near *London*, who were born
within the County of *York*,

JOHN 13. 34, 35. *A new Commandment I
give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have
loved you, that ye also love one another: By this
shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye
love one another.*



AS the Christian Religion in general, is the best Philosophy and most perfect Institution of Life; containing in it the most entire and compleat System of moral Rules and Precepts that was ever yet extant in the World: To it peculiarly excells in the
B Doctrine

Doctrine of *Love and Charity*; earnestly recommending, strictly enjoining, and vehemently and almost perpetually pressing and inculcating the excellency and necessity of this best of Graces and Vertues; and propounding to us for our imitation and encouragement the most lively and heroical Example of kindness and charity that ever was, in the Life and Death of the great Founder of our Religion, the author and finisher of our Faith, *Jesus* the Son of God.

So that the Gospel, as it hath in all other parts of our Duty, cleared the dimness and obscurity of *natural* light, and supplied the imperfections of former *Revelations*; so doth it most eminently reign and triumph in this great and blessed vertue of *Charity*; in which all the Philosophy and Religions that had been before in the World, whether *Jewish* or *Pagan*, were so remarkably defective.

With great reason then doth our blessed Saviour call this a *new Commandment*, and assert it to himself as a thing peculiar to his Doctrine and Religion; considering how imperfectly it had been taught, and how little it had been practised

practised in the World before : *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another : By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.*

I shall reduce my Discourse upon these Words under these six Heads.

First, To enquire in what sence our Saviour calls this Commandment of loving one another a new Commandment.

Secondly, To declare to you the Nature of this Commandment, by instancing in the chief Acts and Properties of Love.

Thirdly, To consider the degrees and measures of our Charity with regard to the several Objects about which it is exercised.

Fourthly, Our Obligation to this Duty not only from our Saviour's Authority, but likewise from our own Nature, and from the Reasonableness and Excellency of the thing commanded.

B 2

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The great Example which is here propounded to our imitation ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Sixthly and Lastly, The Place and Rank which this Precept holds in the Christian Religion. Our Saviour makes it the proper badge of a Disciple, the distinctive mark and character of our Profession ; By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.

- I. *In what sence our Saviour calls this Commandment of loving one another a new Commandment? Not that it is absolutely and altogether New, but upon some special accounts. For it is a branch of the antient and primitive Law of Nature. Aristotle truly observes that upon grounds of natural kindred and likeness, all men are friends, and kindly disposed towards one another. And it is a known Precept of the Jewish Religion, to love our Neighbour as our selves.*

In some sence then, it is no new Commandment ; and so St. John, who was most likely to understand

stand our Saviour's meaning in this particular, (all his preaching and writing being almost nothing else but an inculcating of this one Precept) explains this matter, telling us that in several respects it was, and it was not, a new Commandment, 1 Joh. 2. 7, 8. Brethren, I write no new Commandment unto you, but that which ye had from the beginning, that is, from antient Times: But then he corrects himself, Again, yea, but yet, a new Commandment I write unto you. So that though it was not absolutely new, yet upon divers considerable accounts it was so, and in a peculiar manner proper to the Evangelical Institution; and is in so expresse and particular a manner ascribed to the teaching of the Holy-Ghost, which was conferr'd upon Christians by the Faith of the Gospel, as if there hardly needed any outward instruction and exhortation to that purpose, 1 Thess. 4. 9. But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are brotherly loved, divinely taught and inspired to love one another.

This Commandment then of loving one another is by our Lord and Saviour so much enlarged, as to the Object of it, beyond what either
the

the *Jews* or *Heathens* did understand it to be, extending to all mankind, and even to our greatest enemies; so greatly advanced and heightned, as to the *Degree* of it, even to the laying down of our lives for one another; so effectually taught, so mightily encouraged, so very much urged and insisted upon, that it may very well be called a *new Commandment*; for though it was not altogether unknown to mankind before, yet it was never so taught, so encouraged; never was such an illustrious Example given of it, never so much weight and stress laid upon it, by any *Philosophy* or *Religion* that was before in the world.

- II. II. I shall endeavour to declare to you the *Nature of this Commandment, or the Duty required by it.* And that will best be done, by instancing in the chief *Acts and Properties* of Love and Charity. As, *humanity* and kindness in all our carriage and behaviour towards one another; for Love smooths the dispositions of men, so that they are not apt to grate upon one another: Next, to *rejoyce* in the good and happiness of one another, and to *grieve* at their

their evils and sufferings; for Love unites the in crests of men, so as to make them affected with what happens to another, as if it were in some sort their own case: Then to contribute as much as in us lies to the happiness of one another, by relieving one anothers wants, and redressing their misfortunes: Again, tenderness of their good name and reputation; a proneness to interpret all the words and actions of men to the best sence; patience and forbearance towards one another; and when differences happen, to manage them with all possible calmness and kindness, and to be ready to forgive, and to be reconciled to one another; to pray one for another; and if occasion be, at least if the publick good of Christianity require it, to be ready to lay down our lives for our brethren, and to sacrifice our selves for the furtherance of their Salvation.

III. We will consider the Degrees and measures of our Charity, with regard to the various Objects, about which it is exercised.

And as to the negative part of this Duty, it is

III.

is to be extended equally towards all. We
 are not to hate or bear ill will to any man, or
 to do him any harm or mischief; Love work-
 eth no evil to his neighbour. This much Charity
 we are to exercise towards all, without any ex-
 ceptions, without any difference.

And as to the positive part of this Duty, we
 should bear an universal good will to all men,
 wishing every man's happiness, and praying
 for it as heartily as for our own. And if we
 be sincere herein, we shall be ready upon all
 occasions to procure and promote the welfare
 of all men. But the outward acts and testi-
 monies of our Charity neither can be actually
 extended to all, nor ought to be, to all a-
 like. We do not know the wants of all,
 and therefore our knowledge of persons,
 and of their conditions, doth necessarily
 limit the effects of our Charity within
 a certain compass; and of those we do
 know, we can but relieve a small part for
 want of ability. Whence it becomes neces-
 sary, that we set some rules to our selves for
 the more discreet ordering of our Charity;
 such as these: Cases of extremity ought to
 take

take place of all other. Obligations of Nature, and nearness of Relation, seem to challenge the next place. Obligations of kindness, and upon the account of benefits received, may well lay the next claim. And then the *Household of Faith* is to be peculiarly considered. And after these, the merit of the persons, and all circumstances belonging to them, are to be weighed and valued: Those who labour in an honest calling, but are oppress'd with their charge; those who are fallen from a plentiful condition, especially by misfortune, and the providence of God, without their own fault; those who have relieved others, and have been eminently charitable and beneficial to mankind; and lastly, those whose visible necessities and infirmities of body or mind, whether by age or by accident, do plead for them: All these do challenge our more especial regard and consideration.

IV. We will consider our *Obligations to this Duty, not only from our Saviour's Authority, but likewise from our own Nature, and from the Reasonableness and Excellency of the thing commanded.* IV.

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This

This is the Commandment of the Son of God, who came down from Heaven with full Authority to declare the Will of God to us. And this is peculiarly *His Commandment*, which he urgeth upon his Disciples so earnestly, and so as if he almost required nothing else in comparison of this. *Joh. 15. 12. This is my Commandment, that ye love one another: And vers. 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another, As if this were the end of all his Precepts, and of his whole Doctrine, to bring us to the practice of this Duty. And so St. John, the loving and beloved Disciple, speaks of it, as the great Message, which the Son of God was to deliver to mankind, 1 Joh. 3. 11. This is the Message which ye have heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another. And ver. 23. This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us Commandment. And chap. 4. v. 21. This Commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.* W. VI

But besides the Authority of our Saviour, we have a precedent obligation to it from our own Nature, and from the Reasonableness and Excellency

cellency of the thing it self. The frame of our Nature disposeth us to it, and our inclination to Society, in which there can be no pleasure, no advantage, without mutual love and kindness. And *Equity* also calls for it, for that we our selves wish and expect kindness from others, is conviction enough to us that we owe it to others. The fulfilling of this Law is the great perfection of our Natures, the advancement and enlargement of our Souls, the chief ornament and beauty of a great mind. It makes us like to God, the best, and most perfect, and happiest Being, in that which is the prime excellency, and happiness, and glory of the Divine Nature.

And the advantages of this temper are unspeakable and innumerable. It freeth our souls from those unruly, and troublesome, and disquieting Passions, which are the great torment of our Spirits; from Anger and Envy, from Malice and Revenge, from Jealousy and Discontent. It makes our minds calm and cheerful, and puts our souls into an easy posture, and into good humor, and maintains us in the possession and enjoyment of our

selfes: It preserves men from many mischiefs and inconveniences, to which enmity and ill-will do perpetually expose them: It is apt to make Friends, and to gain Enemies, and to render every condition either pleasant, or easy, or tolerable to us. So that to love others, is the truest love to our selves, and doth redound to our own unspeakable benefit and advantage in all respects.

It is a very considerable part of our Duty, and almost equall'd by our Saviour with the *first and great Commandment of the Law*. It is highly acceptable to God, most beneficial to others, and very comfortable to our selves. It is the easiest of all Duties, and it makes all others easy; the pleasure of it makes the pains to signify nothing, and the delightful reflection upon it afterwards is a most ample reward of it. It is a Duty in every man's power to perform, how strait and indigent soever his fortune and condition be. The poorest man may be as charitable as a Prince; he may have as much kindness in his heart, tho his hand cannot be so bountiful and munificent. Our Saviour instanceth the giving of a *cup of cold water*.

water, as a Charity that will be highly accepted and rewarded by God. And one of the most celebrated Charities that ever was, how small was it for the matter of it, and yet how great in regard of the mind that gave it? I mean the Widow's *two mites*, which she cast into the *Treasury*: One could hardly give less, and yet none can give more, for she gave *all that she had*. All these excellencies and advantages of Love and Charity, which I have briefly recounted, are so many Arguments, so many obligations to the practice of this Duty.

V. We will consider the *great Instance and Example which is here propounded to our imitation*; As I have loved you, that ye also love one another. The Son of God's becoming man, his whole Life, his bitter Death and Passion, all that he did, and all that he suffered, was one great and continued proof and evidence of his mighty love to mankind. The greatest Instance of love among men, and that too but very rare, is for a Man to lay down his life for another, for his Friend; but the Son of God died for all mankind, and we were all his enemies. And should

should we not cheerfully imitate the Example of that great Love and Charity, the effects whereof are so comfortable, so beneficial, so happy to every one of us. Had he not loved us, and died for us, we had certainly perish'd, we had been miserable and undone to all eternity.

And to perpetuate this great Example of Charity, and that it might be always fresh in our memories, the great Sacrament of our Religion was on purpose instituted for the Commemoration of this great love of the Son of God, in laying down his life, and shedding his precious blood for the wicked and rebellious Race of mankind. But I have not time to enlarge upon this noble Argument as it deserves.

VI.

VI. The last thing to be considered is the place and rank which this Precept and Duty holds in the Christian Religion. Our blessed Saviour here makes it the proper badge and cognisance of our Profession; *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* The different Sects among the Jews had some peculiar Character to distinguish them from one another: The Scholars of the several great Rabbis among

among them had some peculiar Sayings and Opinions, some Customs and Traditions whereby they were severally known: And so likewise the Disciples of John the Baptist were particularly remarkable for their great Austerities. In allusion to these distinctions of Sects and Schools among the Jews, our Saviour fixeth upon this mark and character, whereby his Disciples should be known from the Disciples of any other Institution, *A mighty love and affection to one another.*

Other Sects were distinguish'd by little Opinions, or by some external Rites and Observances in Religion; but our Saviour pitcheth upon that which is the most real and substantial, the most large and extensive, the most useful and beneficial, the most human and the most Divine quality of which we are capable.

This was his great Commandment to his Disciples, before he left the World. This was the Legacy he left them, and the effect of his last Prayers for them. And for this end, among others, he instituted the Sacrament of his blessed Body and Blood, to be a lively remembrance of his great Charity to man.

mankind, and a perpetual bond of Love and
 Union amongst his Followers. And the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour do
 upon all occasions recommend this to us, as a
 principal Duty and Part of our Religion; tel-
 ling us, That in Christ Jesus, that is, in the Chri-
 stian Religion, nothing will avail, no not
 Faith it self, unless it be enlivened and inspir'd
 by Charity; That Love is the end of the Command-
 ment, *et cetera*, the end of the Evange-
 lical declaration, the first Fruit of the Spirit, the
 spring and root of all those Graces and Virtues
 which concern our duty towards one another;
 That it is the sum and abridgment, the accom-
 plishment and fulfilling of the whole Law; That
 without this, whatever we pretend to in Chri-
 stianity, we are nothing, and our Religion is vain;
 That this is the greatest of all Graces and Vir-
 tues, greater then Faith and Hope, and of per-
 petual use and duration, Charity never fails.
 And therefore they exhort us above all
 things to endeavour after it, as the Crown of
 all other Virtues; Above all things have fervent
 Charity among your selves, saith St. Peter: And
 St. Paul, having enumerated most other Chri-
 stian

tian Vertues, exhorts us above all to strive af-
 ter this, And above all these things put on Charity,
 which is the bond of perfection. This St. John makes
 one of the most certain signs of our love to
 God, and the want of it an undeniable argu-
 ment of the contrary: If a man say I love God,
 and hateb his brother, he is a liar; for he who loveth
 not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love
 God whom he hath not seen? This he declares to
 be one of the best evidences that we are in a
 state of Grace and Salvation, Hereby we know
 that we are passed from death to life, because we love
 the Brethren. So that well might our blessed Saviour
 chuse this for the badge of his Disciples, and
 make it the great Precept of the best and most
 perfect Institution. Other things might have
 served better for pomp and ostentation, and
 have more gratified the Curiosity, or Enthu-
 siasme, or Superstition of mankind; But there is
 no quality in the World which upon a sober
 and impartial consideration is of a more solid
 and intrinsick value.

And in the first Ages of Christianity, the
 Christians were very eminent for this Vertue,

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and

and particularly noted for it; *Nobis notam inas-
rit apud quosdam*; it is a mark and brand set upon us
by some; saith *Tertullian*; and he tells us that it
was proverbially said among the *Heathens*; Be-
hold how these *Christians* love one another. *Lucian*;
that great scoffer at all Religion, acknowledg-
eth in behalf of *Christians*, that this was the
great Principle which *their Master* had instill'd
into them. And *Julian*, the bitterest Enemy
that *Christianity* ever had; could not forbear
to propound to the *Heathens* for an example
the charity of the *Galileans*; for so by way of
reproach he calls the *Christians*, who (says he)
gave up themselves to humanity and kindness;
which he acknowledgeth to have been very
much to the advantage and reputation of our
Religion. And in the same Letter to *Arseius*,
the *Heathen* High Priest of *Galatia*; he gives
this memorable Testimony of the *Christians*,
that their Charity was not limited and confin'd
only to themselves; but extended even to their
Enemies; which could not be said either of
the *Jews* or *Heathens*: His words are these, It
is a shame; that when the *Jews* suffer none of theirs
to beg; and the *impious Galileans* relieve not only
theirs

their own; but those also of our Religion; that We only should be defective in so necessary a Duty. By all which it is evident that Love and Charity is not only the great Precept of our Saviour, but was in those first and best Times the general practice of his Disciples; and acknowledged by the *Hearthens* as a very peculiar and remarkable quality in them.

The Application I shall make of this Discourse shall be threefold.

1. With relation to the Church of Rome.
2. With regard to our selves who profess the Protestant Reform'd Religion.
3. With a more particular respect to the occasion of this Meeting.

First, With relation to the Church of Rome : I. Which we cannot chuse but think of, whenever we speak of Charity and loving one another; especially having had so late a Discovery of their affection to us, and so considerable a testimony of the kindness and charity which they design'd towards us: such as may justly make the ears of all that hear it to tingle, and render

Popery execrable and infamous, a frightful and a hateful thing to the end of the World.

It is now but too visible how grossly this great Commandment of our Saviour is contradicted, not only by the Practices of those in that Communion, from the Pope down to the meanest Fryar; but, by the very Doctrines and Principles, by the *Genius* and Spirit of that Religion, which is wholly calculated for cruelty and persecution. Where now is that mark of a Disciple, so much insisted upon by our Lord and Master, to be found in that Church? And yet what is the Christian Church but the Society and Community of Christ's Disciples? Surely in all reason, that which our Lord made the distinctive Mark and Character of his Disciples, should be the principal mark of a true Church. *Bellarmino* reckons up no less then fifteen marks of the true Church, all which the Church of Rome arrogates to her self alone: But he wisely forgot that, which is worth all the rest, and which our Saviour insists upon as the chief of all other, A sincere Love and Charity to all Christians: This he knew would by no means agree to his own Church.

But

But for all that, it is very reasonable that Churches as well as particular Christians should be judged by their Charity. The Church of Rome would engross all Faith to her self; Faith in its utmost perfection, to the degree and pitch of Infallibility: And they allow no body in the world, besides themselves, no though they believe all the Articles of the Apostles Creed, to have one grain of true Faith; because they do not believe upon the Authority of their Church, which they pretend to be the only foundation of true Faith. This is a most arrogant and vain pretence; but admit it were true, yet in the judgment of St. Paul, though they had all Faith, if they have not Charity, they are nothing.

The greatest wonder of all this is, that they who hate and persecute Christians most, do all this while the most confidently of all others pretend to be the Disciples of Christ, and will allow none to be so but themselves. That Church which excommunicates all other Christian Churches in the world, and if she could, would extirpate them out of the world, will yet needs assume to her self to be the only

only Christian Church: As if our Saviour had said, *Hereby shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye hate, and excommunicate, and kill one another. What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? thou empty and impudent pretence of Christianity!*

II. Secondly, *With relation to our selves, who profess the Protestant Reformed Religion.* How is this great Precept of our Saviour not only shamefully neglected, but plainly violated by us? And that not only by private hatred and ill-wills, quarrels and contentions in our civil conversation and intercourse with one another, but by most unchristian divisions and animosities in that common relation wherein we stand to one another, as Brethren, as Christians, as Protestants.

Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? And are we not in a more peculiar and eminent manner Brethren, being all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ? Are we not all members of the same Body, and partakers of the same Spirit, and Heirs of the same blessed Hopes of eternal life?

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So that being Brethren upon so many accounts, and by so many bonds and endearments all united to one another, and all traveling towards the same heavenly Country, why do we fall out by the way, since we are Brethren? Why do we not, as becomes Brethren, dwell together in unity? but are so apt to quarrel, and break out into heats, to crumble into Sects and Parties, to divide and separate from one another, upon every slight and trifling occasion.

Give me leave a little more fully to expostulate this matter, but very calmly and in the spirit of meekness, and in the name of our dear Lord, who loved us all at such a rate as to die for us, to recommend to you this new Commandment of his, that ye love one another: Which is almost a new Commandment still, and hardly the worse for wearing, so seldom is it put on, and so little hath it been practised among Christians for several Ages. Consider seriously with your selves, ought not the great matters wherein we are agreed, our Union in the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, and in all the necessary Articles of that

that Faith which was once delivered to the Saints; in the same Sacraments, and in all the substantial parts of God's worship, and in the great Duties and Vertues of the Christian life, to be of greater force to unite us, than difference in doubtful Opinions, and in little Rites and circumstances of Worship, to divide and break us?

Are not the things about which we differ, in their nature *indifferent*, that is, things about which there ought to be no difference among wise men? Are they not at a great distance from the life and essence of Religion, and rather good or bad as they tend to the peace and Unity of the Church, or are made use of to Schism and Faction, then either necessary or evil in themselves? And shall little scruples weigh so far with us, as by breaking the Peace of the Church about them to endanger our whole Religion? Shall we take one another by the throat for an hundred pence, when our common Adversary stands ready to clap upon us an Action of ten thousand talents? Can we in good earnest be contented that rather than the Surplice should not be thrown out,

Popery

Popery should come in? and rather than receive the Sacrament in the humble but indifferent posture of *kneeling*, to swallow the Camel of *Transubstantiation*, and adore the Elements of Bread and Wine for our God and Saviour? and rather than to submit to a *set Form* of Prayer, to have the Service of God perform'd in an *unknown Tongue*?

Are we not yet made sensible, *at least in this our Day*, by so clear a Demonstration as the Providence of God hath lately given us; and had not He been infinitely mercifull to us, might have proved the dearest and most dangerous Experiment that ever was: I say, are we not yet convinced, what mighty advantages our Enemies have made of our Divisions, and what a plentiful harvest they have had among us, during our Differences, and upon occasion of them; and how near their Religion was to have entred in upon us at once at those wide breaches which we had made for it? And will we still take counsell of our Enemies, and chuse to follow that course to which, of all other, they

E who

who hate us and seek our ruin, would most certainly advise and direct us? Will we freely offer them that advantage, which they would be contented to purchase at any rate?

Let us, after all our sad experience, at last take warning to keep a stedfast eye upon our chief Enemy, and not suffer our selves to be diverted from the consideration and regard of our greatest danger, by the petty provocations of our Friends; so I chuse to call those who dissent from us in lesser matters, because I would fain have them so, and they ought in all reason to be so: But however they behave themselves, we ought not much to mind those who only sling dirt at us, whilst we are sure there are others who fly at our throats, and strike at our very hearts.

Let us learn this wisdom of our Enemies, who though they have many great differences among themselves, yet they have made a shift at this time to unite together to destroy us: And shall not we do as much to save our selves?

fas est & ab hoste doceri.

It was a Principle among the ancient Romans, a brave and a wise People, *donare inimicitias Reip.* to give up, and sacrifice their private enmities and quarrels to the publick good, and the safety of the Commonwealth. And is it not to every considerate man, as clear as the Sun at Noonday, that nothing can maintain and support the Protestant Religion amongst us, and *found* our Church upon a Rock, so that *when the rain falls, and the winds blow, and the floods beat upon it*, it shall stand firm and unshaken? That nothing can be a Bulwark of sufficient force to resist all the arts and attempts of Popery, but an *established National Religion*, firmly united and compacted in all the parts of it? Is it not plain to every eye, that little *Sects* and *separate Congregations* can never do it? but will be like a Foundation of sand to a weighty Building, which whatever shew it may make cannot stand long, because it wants Union at the Foundation, and for that reason must necessarily want strength and firmness.

It is not for private Persons to undertake in matters of publick concernment ; but I think we have no cause to doubt, but the Governours of our Church (notwithstanding all the advantages of Authority, and we think of Reason too on our side) are Persons of that Piety and Prudence, that for Peace sake, and in order to a firm Union among Protestants, they would be content, if that would do it, not to insist upon little things ; but to yield them up, whether to the infirmity, or importunity, or, perhaps in some very few things, to the plausible exceptions of those who differ from us.

But then surely on the other side, men ought to bring along with them a peaceable disposition, and a mind ready to comply with the Church in which they were born and baptized, in all reasonable and lawfull things, and desirous upon any terms that are tolerable to return to the Communion of it : a mind free from passion and prejudice, from peevish exceptions, and groundless and endless scruples ; not apt to insist upon little cavils and objections, to which the very best things,

things, and the greatest and clearest Truths in the world, are, and alwaies will be lyable: And whatever they have been heretofore, to be henceforth *no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive.*

And if we were thus affected on all hands, we might yet be a happy Church and Nation; if we would govern our selves by these Rules, and walk according to them, *peace would be upon us, and mercy, and on the Israel of God.*

Thirdly, I shall conclude all with a few words, *in relation to the occasion of this present meeting.* I have all this while been recommending to you, from the Authority and Example of our Blessed Saviour, and from the nature and reason of the thing it self, this most excellent Grace and Vertue of Charity, in the most proper Acts and Instances of it: But besides particular Acts of Charity to be exercised upon emergent occasions, there are likewise charitable Cu-

stoms which are highly commendable, because they are more certain and constant, of a larger extent, and of a longer continuance: As the *Meeting* of the *Sons* of the *Clergy*, which is now form'd and establish'd into a *charitable Corporation*: And the Anniversary *Meetings* of those of the several *Counties of England*, who reside, or happen to be in *London*; for two of the best and noblest ends that can be, the maintaining of *Friendship*, and the promoting of *Charity*. These, and others of the like kind, I call *charitable Customs*, which of late years have very much obtained in this great and famous City. And it cannot but be a great pleasure and satisfaction, to all good men, to see so generous, so humane, so Christian a disposition to prevail and reign so much amongst us.

The strange overflowing of vice and wickedness in our Land, and the prodigious increase and impudence of infidelity and impiety, hath of late years boaded very ill to us, and brought terrible Judgements upon this City and Nation, and seems still to threaten

threaten us with more and greater: And the greatest comfort I have had, under these sad apprehensions of God's displeasure, hath been this, that though *bad* men were perhaps never worse in any Age, yet the *good*, who I hope are not a few, were never more truly and substantially good: I do verily believe there never were, in any Time, greater and more real effects of Charity; not from a blind superstition, and an ignorant zeal, and a mercenary and arrogant and presumptuous principle of Merit, but from a sound knowledge, and a sincere love and obedience to God; or, as the *Apostle* expresses it, *out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.*

And who, that loves God and Religion, can chuse but take great contentment to see so general and forward an inclination in People this way? Which hath been very much cherished of late years by this sort of Meetings: and that to very good purpose and effect, in many charitable contributions disposed in the best and wisest ways: And which likewise hath tended very much to the reconciling

ling of the minds of men, and the allaying of those fierce heats and animosities which have been caused by our Civil confusions, and Religious distractions. For there is nothing many times wanting to take away prejudice, and to extinguish hatred and ill-will, but an opportunity for men to see and understand one another; by which they will quickly perceive, that they are not such Monsters as they have been represented one to another at a distance.

- We are, I think, one of the last *Counties* of *England* that have entred into this friendly and charitable kind of Society; Let us make amends for our late setting out by quickning our pace, that so we may overtake and outstrip those who are gone before us: Let not our Charity partake of the coldness of our Climate, but let us endeavour that it may be equal to the extent of our Country; and as we are incomparably the greatest *County* of *England*, let it appear that we are so, by the largeness and extent of our Charity.

O Lord

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without Charity are nothing, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace, and of all Vertues: Without which whosoever liveth, is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thy onely Son Iesus Christ's sake.

Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Iesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Iesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.

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THE END.

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